

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 651  
By Cooper

A RESOLUTION to recognize Joe Patton on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who in their years of work have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Joe Patton is one such estimable person who served with distinction for twelve years as a general assignments reporter for *The Tullahoma News*, completing a thirty-three year career in the newspaper business; and

WHEREAS, a general assignments reporter for most of his career, including his time with *The Tullahoma News*, Joe Patton covered education, utilities, and crime beats with great tenacity and demonstrated a deep desire to do right by the public by acquiring and disseminating accurate information to the masses in a timely manner; he was known as "a very thorough, conscientious, quick-witted, and a very good all-around reporter"; and

WHEREAS, a native of Alabama, Joe Patton spent most of his career working at newspapers in three states. He entered journalism as a profession after graduating from Jacksonville State University in 1970, where he earned a double major in History and Political Science and a minor in English; and

WHEREAS, while serving in the United States Army, Mr. Patton wrote technical material, a good background for the career that he spent over three decades perfecting; he began with a basic journalism class in high school, and wrote for the campus newspaper in 1968 during the height of the Vietnam War, covering many aspects of that time period, especially the protests that followed the conflict; and

WHEREAS, Joe's first job was at *The Huntsville News*, where after working for free one night on the general assignment desk, he impressed city editor Phil Smith so much that Joe was

hired on the spot, chosen over several journalism school graduates who were vying for the position; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Patton is an active and important part of his community and his profession, he retired in 1995 from the Army and Army National Guard having served for 26 years as a military reporter; and

WHEREAS, during his time with the National Guard, Joe spent two and a half years as Senior Editor of the Theatre Support Element at the U.S. Southern Command and as the public affairs NCO of the National Guard task force in Panama; he earned several military awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Alabama National Guard Distinguished Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, he considers most proudest accomplishment in journalism to be winning the Alabama Press Association Award for an editorial he wrote on school prayer, which was later filed in a court brief and used as a persuasive argument for school prayer; he has also been honored by the Tennessee School Board Association for his excellence in education reporting, and among the many other awards and honors, Mr. Patton has also been recognized with the Alabama Award of Merit, and many others too numerous to mention; and

WHEREAS, Joe Patton exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Joe Patton has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Mr. Joe Patton our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.